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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role departmental chairs play in curriculum planning, who is chosen to lead the process, the behaviors used, and the complementary or conflicting roles played by other faculty members. Data for the analysis were drawn from interviews with 44 department chairs and 83 faculty in Carnegie classification institutions; these departments were defined as "continuously planning" departments, i.e., they engaged in regular, collaborative, and information-based curriculum planning. The study examined how chairs of such departments viewed their leadership role in curriculum; what contextual variables influence the role department chairs play; and in what kinds of situations do chairs decide to have faculty members provide curriculum leadership. Seven broad categories of self-reported leadership roles were developed from the interview data: facilitator, initiator, agenda setter, coordinator, advocate, sensor, and standard setter. The study found that department size affects the role department chairs play, especially in regard to the undergraduate curriculum when the department also offers graduate programs. Institutional type also affects the type of leadership department chairs provide, with chairs in research and doctoral institutions seeing their primary roles as facilitators and advocates. Curriculum leadership is also influenced by institutional climate that emphasizes curriculum planning, assessment, and other types of strategic planning. (Contains 14 references.) (CH)

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Curriculum Leadership Roles of Chairs in "Continuously Planning" Departments

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Abstract

Curriculum Leadership Roles of Chairs in "Continuously Planning" Departments

Forty-four chairpersons of departments judged by provosts at randomly-selected institutions to be engaged in especially effective curriculum planning were interviewed about their roles. The interviews suggest seven leadership roles used in the curriculum development process. The roles varied by institutional type, department size, and personal choice. This paper reviews the conceptual framework that guided the study, describes the interview population and sample, illustrates the leadership roles with quotations, relates the roles to organizational contexts, and develops implications for institutional researchers.

Curriculum Leadership Roles of Chairs in "Continuously Planning" Departments[1]

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The college or university department is appropriately a primary locus of curriculum review and academic planning. For effective curricular development, department leadership is crucial. In a recent literature review, however, we reported a discrepancy between rhetoric urging department chairs to exercise curricular leadership and empirical studies reporting that such leadership is a low priority for chairs (Author identifiable reference 1998). We also noted that few researchers have specifically explored the important and complex phenomenon of departmental curriculum leadership. Thus, to guide research on departmental curriculum leadership, we developed a conceptual framework that may help to identify some roles, behaviors, and capabilities that can characterize effective program curriculum leaders and to identify important influences upon these leaders. In deriving the framework we examined literature on curriculum development and leadership (both in higher education and K-12 education), educational change, educational innovation and diffusion, improving college teaching and learning, characteristics of the disciplines and professional fields, and organizational environments of colleges and universities. The result was a scheme, shown graphically in Figure 1, that

[1] The authors appreciate financial support from a Spencer Foundation Small Grants Award.

suggests exploring four major aspects of curriculum planning: context, roles, processes and decisions. Within these four major aspects, we have listed some of the potentially important issues, influences, and variables. However, since we intend the framework to apply to a wide range of departments and institutions, we have specified them very generally and invite additions. The task of describing the salient influences in specific contexts remains for future study. In general, the framework posits that the chair's role acceptance, specific leadership activities, and expertise in curriculum may be influenced by the department's context and, in turn, may influence planning processes and decisions. Clearly, the framework, which is elaborated in detail elsewhere, suggests many potential relationships to be explored (Author identifiable reference 1999). The study reported here was guided by the framework shown in Figure 1 and focused specifically on the program or department chair's self-reported role in curriculum leadership for the undergraduate program.

----------Figure 1 goes about here -------

STUDY PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

Previous research (Creswell and others 1987) suggested that department chairs either accept a curriculum leadership role or reject it, becoming mere "caretakers" who focus on administrative "housekeeping" tasks rather than providing leadership to move the department beyond mundane concerns. These researchers also noted that when the chair does not take a leadership role, others in the faculty group may do so. In fact, some researchers claim there is rarely one leader in the curriculum change process especially in

large universities (Conrad, cited in Louis 1989, p. 17). Thus, we felt that understanding curriculum planning in a department may require not only knowledge about role acceptance but about the leader behaviors used, the chair's reasons for choosing them, and the complementary or conflicting roles played by other faculty members.

Data for this analysis were drawn from a more comprehensive study of departmental level curriculum planning that included considerable information about the context in which each department chair served. Previous studies reporting that many department chairs give little attention to curricular leadership, at least relative to other pressing administrative concerns, used random samples of department chairs. To find models that illustrate positive practice in curriculum leadership, we sought instead departments that engaged in regular, collaborative, and information-based curriculum planning as their routine practice, rather than as an exception. We called these "continuously planning departments."[2] For the comprehensive study, our research questions, stated broadly, were:

(1) How do chairs of "continuously planning" departments view their leadership role in curriculum?

(2) What contextual variables influence the role these department chairpersons play?

(3) In what types of situations do chairs think it's better to have faculty members rather than the chair provide curriculum leadership?

These broad questions were translated into more specific queries for an interview protocol.

METHODS, DATA SOURCES, AND ANALYSES

To identify the "continuously planning" departments, we used a two-stage sampling process. First, we drew a stratified random sample of institutions from those Carnegie classifications most likely to have academic departments with seven or more full-time faculty members: Research I and II, Doctoral I and II, Master's I, and Associate of Arts. By mail and telephone follow-up, we invited the chief academic officers at these 105 four-year and 148 two-year colleges to nominate academic departments with at least seven full-time faculty that are "especially effective" in reviewing and planning their undergraduate curricula. We supplied eight possible, but optional effectiveness indicators (shown in Table 1) and invited provosts to contribute relevant others. Through these procedures, we developed a pool of 213 departments from 81 institutions that appeared to meet our criteria. The situations of these departments provided varied contexts in which to explore leadership roles of chairs. In the second stage, we arrayed the nominated departments in a 28-cell matrix (four primary Carnegie classifications by seven broad groups of pure and applied academic fields) and selected 50 departments for study. To the extent possible, we chose at least one department in every cell of the matrix. From the 50 departments we obtained 44 usable interviews of department chairs and 83 additional interviews from one or two of their faculty members. This article uses data only from the department chair interviews.

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[2] A paper describing criteria for "continuous planning" in curriculum development is in progress.

TABLE 1. Criteria for Nominating "Continuously Planning Departments"*

Criterion	Number of Times Provosts Designated Criterion in 213 Nominations
Gives frequent attention to appraising the curriculum for renewal and redirection	174
Maintains a high level of faculty involvement in curriculum issues	173
Is attuned to external issues that may influence curriculum	156
Gathers and uses relevant information about program successes and failures in the planning process	154
Implement curriculum plans in a timely and effective way	146
Is attuned to internal issues that may influence curriculum	141
Has identifiable curriculum leaders who encourage systematic appraisal	133

* About 10% of the provosts contributed additional reasons for their nominations. Those most frequently mentioned included: a successful recent overhaul of the curriculum, adopting new pedagogy, integrating media, and strengthening interdisciplinary efforts. Other reasons included: positive comments by accreditors, outstanding assessment procedures, responsiveness to community and employer needs, respect on campus, collegiality, receipt of grants and awards, and building a flexible program.

Each of three authors interviewed about a third of the 44 department chairs by telephone for 50 to 90 minutes using a semi-structured protocol. We also gathered personal and departmental data from both the chairs and their departmental web pages. The senior author listened to all of the taped interviews, read each transcription, and prepared a summary of each case including factual information about department context such as enrollment, union status, curriculum committee structure, the chair's term of office and method of selection, and the issues currently under consideration by the department. In doing so she gained a general sense of the kinds of answers chairs gave to the key questions focusing on their leadership style. Using the verbatim transcriptions but no pre-existing codes, she then used the QSR NUD*IST Vivo 1.1 qualitative data analysis program to code references to the chairs' leadership roles in the interviews.

Not all the questions in the interview were relevant to the department chair's role. Department chairs' answers to the following questions in the protocol were most often used in the analysis:

- How would you describe your role in curriculum development?
- To what extent is the role you play one you prefer or one that is expected of you?
- Some say that department chairs are reluctant or unwilling to lead in curriculum matters. Would you share your thoughts about that?
- Are there members of your department that you think especially contribute to curriculum leadership? In what ways?

- What are some situations in which you feel it is better to have a faculty member rather than the chair take leadership in curriculum matters?
- Will you describe for me a curriculum decision that has recently been made by the program and how it came about?

Answers to other questions were also coded if the chairs answered in a way that described their leadership role. Some of the questions that produced such descriptions were:

- What curriculum issues and decisions are currently of interest to the department as a whole?
- Are there other issues that you, as chair, are especially interested in?
- What things do you think are particularly important about your department in terms of its process of curriculum decision making?
- Would you say that your department shares a mission or "vision" of its work? If yes, would you describe that vision.
- How would you characterize your department's curriculum activities with respect to faculty collaboration?

In the initial coding of the self-reported leadership roles, the actual words of the informant were retained in the coding whenever possible. Subsequently, the senior author studied the coded passages retrieved from the data base and grouped similar roles into a more parsimonious set of themes.

RESULTS

Description of informants

Table 2 lists the wide variety of disciplines encompassed by the departments our informants chaired and Table 3 describes other characteristics of the 44 different departments. As Table 3 illustrates, some departments had graduate programs co-existing with the undergraduate programs on which our study focused. Some departments offered courses primarily for upper-division majors while others were community college departments providing lower-division general education or vocational education. Some employed no part-time faculty members while others depended heavily on such individuals to carry out the teaching program. The chairs' estimates of the distribution of time devoted by department faculty to teaching, research and service varied widely. Finally, about 41% of the colleges had faculty unions while the remainder did not.

TABLE 2. Disciplines of Departments in Sample

Subject	Number of departments
Communications/ Journalism	5
Education	2
Bioengineering	1
Electrical engineering	1
Engineering technology	2
Industrial production technology	1
English language and literature	4
Biological sciences	2
Biochemistry and biophysics	1
Botany	1
Mathematics (and computer science)	6
Chemistry	3
Psychology	2
Social sciences and history	2
History	1
Sociology	3
Fine arts and art studies	2
Health administration	1
Nursing	3
Accounting and information science	1
	44

TABLE 3. Characteristics of Departments the Informants Chaired*

	Mean or Frequency	Percent	Median	Standard Deviation	Range
Institutional Type					
Research	10	22.7			
Doctoral	6	13.6			
Masters	17	38.6			
Associate degree	11	25.0			
Fraction of time chair spends in administration	54.4		50	23.1	8 to 95
Full time graduate faculty	1.6		0	3.5	0 to 15
Part time graduate faculty	1.9		0	3.6	0 to 14
Full time undergraduate faculty	14.3		12	5.8	6 to 27
Part time undergraduate faculty	14.5		5	20.8	0 to 97
Total full time faculty	17.1		17	7.4	6 to 38
Undergraduate majors	87.7		45	113.1	10 to 530
Graduate majors	11.9		5	18.0	0 to 90
Frequency of faculty meetings (2=one per month)	2.15		2	.48	1 to 3
Frequency of curriculum discussions (2=one per month)	1.60		2	.63	1 to 3
Percent of students who are majors	46.9		42.5	34.5	0 to 100
Percent of students other majors	34.4		27.5	31.2	0 to 95
Percent of students general education	21.1		10	27.9	0 to 100
Dept faculty- percent time in teaching	62.6		60	17.7	30 to 100
Dept faculty - percent time in research	20.1		20	15.6	0 to 50
Dept faculty - percent time in professional service	11.7		10	6.7	0 to 30
Dept faculty - percent time in community service	5.1		5	5.4	0 to 30
Union					
Yes	18	40.9			
No	23	52.3			
Missing	3	6.8			

* Three chairpersons failed to supply departmental data. Some was available from department web pages.

TABLE 4. Characteristics of the Department Chairs

	Percent	Mean or Frequency	Standard Deviation.	Range
Age		53.7	6.39	40 to 75
Degree held				
AA or AS	0	0		
BA or Bs	0	0		
Masters	18.2	8		
Ed.D.	6.8	3		
Ph.D.	68.2	30		
JD or MD	0	0		
Missing	6.8	3		
Academic Rank				
Not ranked	25.0	11		
Lecturer	0	0		
Instructor	0	0		
Assistant Professor	4.5	2		
Associate Professor	9.1	4		
Professor	54.5	24		
Missing	6.8	3		
Gender*				
Male	70.5	31		
Female	29.5	13		
Years of teaching		23.5	7.8	2 to 40
Years at this college		18.5	9.1	2 to 40
Years of other work		5.0	6.4	0 to 25
Years of administrative work above dept		3.3	8.1	0 to 38
Percent time in administration		59.3	24.9	10 to 99

* 3 chairs did not supply personal data but their gender is known from the interview.

Table 4 provides the personal and professional characteristics of the department chairs. As might be expected, most chairpersons had a doctoral degree, held the top professorial ranks applicable, and had many years of teaching experience. Seventy percent were male and thirty percent were female. The chairpersons reported relatively little work experience outside of college teaching but some had held college administrative posts other than department chair.

Leadership roles

Table 5 gives, in order of frequency of mention, the twenty-seven leadership roles mentioned by the chairpersons. Often a chair described more than one role and such statements were coded for all of the different ideas mentioned. Whenever possible a term used by one of the interviewees was used to characterize a role.

After reading the quotations in these initial categories several times, and noting linked themes and those coded under more than one category, the senior author reduced the list of self-reported leadership roles to seven: facilitator, initiator, agenda setter, coordinator, advocate, sensor, and standard setter. The frequency of mention of these themes is described in Table 6 and each leadership role is described below. As will become apparent in the discussion, some of the roles are not mutually exclusive. A chair may play different roles at different times in the curriculum development process and may vary his or her usual role according to the situation.

TABLE 5. Initial Coding of Roles Mentioned by Department Chairs in Interviews

Role	Interviews Coded
Facilitator	25
Initiator	21
Agenda Setter	18
Coordinator	11
Prodder	11
Information Broker	10
External Sensor	10
Process Leader	9
Advocate for discipline	9
Problem Sensor	8
Vision Setter	8
Manager	7
Resource Procurer	6
Delegator	5
Supervisor	4
Communicator	4
Employer of good people	4
Monitor	4
First among equals	4
Standard Setter	2
Time Protector	2
Integrator	2
Priority Setter	2
Conflict Resolver	1
Mentor	1
Juggler	1

TABLE 6. Leadership Role Themes

Role	Interviews Coded	Percent of Chairs
Facilitator	32	73
Sensor	26	59
Initiator	21	48
Agenda Setter	21	48
Advocate	18	41
Coordinator	17	39
Standard Setter	11	25

Facilitator

Most frequently, chairpersons of academic departments see themselves as facilitators of the curriculum planning process. The role of facilitator subsumes the roles we initially coded as process leader, integrator, first among equals, and prodder. A facilitator gets the right people to talk together. He or she is concerned with setting a tone-- supportive and welcoming of the free flow of ideas-- but eventually helping the discussion to reach closure. Facilitators often mention that they establish processes in which the faculty can work and produce their best thinking. These may include committee structures, and faculty meetings or off-campus retreats with carefully constructed agendas to encourage focus, consensus, and closure. Chairs in various disciplines and types of institutions described the role as follows:

> I see my role in curriculum development primarily as a facilitator. Again, as I told you, I don't have a pedagogical agenda. And what I see myself doing is facilitating the curriculum committee in instituting the wishes of the department with respect to what approach we're going to use

in teaching our core. ... And so the primary impetus for any change, or the impetus for change of the entire core or the content of the courses, comes more from the faculty than from myself, and I simply serve to facilitate that with respect to getting a decision made, moving the process along. (Chair, biology, masters university)

First of all, there's a kind of administrative oversight role, just kind of touching the bases, making sure the committee's working, kind of trying to serve as a conduit for their--to get an audience for their issues, by scheduling it in faculty meetings and allocating the appropriate amount of time. You know, I'm just a kind of facilitator, if you want to think about it that way. (Chair, communications, research university)

I spend a lot of time organizing meetings, getting various groups of people together to talk about various issues, and usually good things happen in these meetings that wouldn't have happened without them. I'm not so much directly involved in the actual nuts and bolts of the planning, but I try to facilitate it by getting people-- the right people-- to talk to each other. (Chair, mathematics, research university)

The faculty are the ones that deal with the content of the curriculum and the curriculum revision but I highly control the process by setting up strategic planning sessions, facilitating, organizing, having groups, and

those kinds of things. So I'm a very strong process leader and facilitator. [Chair, communications, doctoral university]

A facilitator almost never puts a proposal of his or her own on the table for faculty consideration, feeling that such a move would create resistance or show bias for a particular decision, thus negating faculty authority and responsibility. Facilitators try to avoid even the appearance of initiating proposals or ideas although they may plant ideas with individual faculty members or committee chairs and hope that the individuals develop them. They may even make committee appointments with the expectation that certain issues will be considered. One chair described it this way:

> My role right now has been to encourage activity at the undergraduate program level. I've selected somebody who's a real go-getter as the chair [of the undergraduate curriculum committee]on purpose because I really wanted him to not come to the end of the year without making some changes that I thought really needed making about some of the requirements and so on. So I picked somebody who was interested in these issues. He and I have talked about these issues and so I'm cheerleading him ... (Chair, sociology, research university)

And another had a more colorful illustration.

> And I'll tell you what I try to do. I'm not going to say how successful I am, but I heard Walt Disney one time and they said "What do

you do?" and he went through all the specifics and he said "I don't do anything." They said again, Well, what do you do?? And he said, "I'm actually like a little bee, and I go around and spread pollen." And that's part of what I try to do. I just try to go around and talk to the different people, and [when] they get an idea that matches with somebody else, I try to get them together. I try to provide an atmosphere, so that we're willing to talk to each other; we're willing to share ideas. Sometimes we get a bad idea-- well, that's the way it goes sometimes. You're getting a bunch of ideas. Some of them aren't going to work; some of them are wonderful. And so, you've got to provide an atmosphere, I think. I think that one of my major functions is making sure that we have an atmosphere in which they can express their ideas and they can try things. (Chair, engineering technology, community college)

In addition to shepherding the process, a facilitator can and will work as an advocate to seek resources and support from upper levels of administration for an individual's idea or a departmental decision. 3

I am here to facilitate and to guide. Ultimately I get involved at some level with the resource issues, but I see my role as one of a facilitator.

[3] A few chairs used the word facilitation in a sense quite different from guiding the discussion process. They saw it as helping faculty by ensuring that the detailed paperwork of curriculum approval is done, either by doing it themselves or seeing that support staff are available to do it. This type of facilitating role was coded under "manager/ coordinator."

> Let me also say it's a kind of leadership but it's "softly directive" if you understand what I mean. (Chair, psychology, masters university)

Initiator

Like the facilitator, the initiator calls meetings. The difference is that the initiator often puts forth a proposal or a draft for faculty to consider; a facilitator definitely does not, preferring merely to arrange conditions for discussion unless the process is totally bogged down. In rare cases chairs say they are both initiators and facilitators but when their actual statements are examined, they tend to emphasize only one of these roles.

Initiators may introduce proposals, ideas, or drafts of changes because various constituencies (faculty, students, others) have expressed a need or voiced a concern. They also may introduce a proposal because they know about new administrative mandates, changes in job markets within a profession, or curriculum trends at other institutions. Thus, initiators are often also "sensors," feeling a responsibility to know what is going on internally and externally that needs a departmental response. The following quotations illustrate the process of initiation in response to problems or trends.

> Okay, the decision that we recently made -- to have what we call concentrations within the major-- I guess this particular thing-- I guess I initiated it in that a couple of years ago we began a process where we looked at the research foci and what we wanted those to be for the future, for the next ten years. We came to four major areas that we want to emphasize within the larger domain of microbiology and once we did that,

it seemed to me that we should be thinking how that decision relates to what we're teaching. So, we began. I don't even remember exactly how we began the process but I aised the question of "well how should this impact what we're teaching?" [Chair microbiology, research university]

Well I initiated the discussion of the composition curriculum because it seemed that people were starting to get a little frustrated with it. [Chair, humanities, community college]

Oh I think it's [a process] of stimulating thought, of bringing one's views and print material to the attention of the faculty to indicate that ...here's some trends we ought to look at, here's some feedback we're getting through the advisory committees, here's what we're seeing as occurring at the four-year institutions, and to kind of put that in the hands of the faculty and say "Well you know, why don't we think about this, is there some particular interest in developing certain courses, or even looking to a new concentration?" ... That's certainly the job of the chair. [Chair, social/behavioral science, community college]

I just do a little study before hand, [such as] contact universities who have a course of this nature, and present a brief outline or brief syllabus, maybe even speak to a [book] salesperson if they have a good text on that and present it [to the faculty] as a package. I say "Now this is a

brief outline, this is what we can do, and now let's have your inputs." Many times this is handed to the faculty members a week or two before we get together. [Chair, humanities, community college]

I try to do it cooperatively and promote ideas, but I don't push them necessarily. I introduce them [the ideas] and promote them and if they seem excited about it, maybe we'll go in that direction. If they're not too excited, maybe I'll try it later on, or, you know, if it's something that I really believe in. I'll say "but let's talk about this seriously a minute." And they'll do that and they still might tell me that I'm off base or whatever and then it won't go anywhere. But most times we have some success. So in terms of, like, initiating some ideas and then providing the opportunity to explore-- is where I really find myself. [Chair, industrial technology, masters university]

Sometimes, in order to get the process moving, an initiator capitalizes on a faculty discussion that has already been held to write up a proposal that he or she believes reflects faculty sentiment.

I took the responsibility for calling the faculty together to discuss this curriculum. And during that following summer, I had an undergraduate revise all of the courses in accordance with the discussion from that faculty meeting. All of the revisions of the individual courses and the revision of the major went out to everybody in the faculty. ... It is both a strength and a weakness of participatory curriculum revision [that] you have somebody

who says they're going to do something and they don't do it. You know, it's one of those things, that's why I do it myself. [Chair, social science, doctoral university]

Finally, initiators may introduce proposals because they feel they are needed to overcome faculty lethargy or to break a stalemate. In this case, the chair takes on a role some referred to as "prodder." Like a facilitator, an initiator occasionally may also decide to be a prodder if he or she feels closure definitely is needed.

> And you know, it was just one of those things that it just didn't seem to be going anywhere. In the final analysis, I have learned over the years, to make something happen, if you want it to happen, you have to provide the framework, if you will. So I did that: I wrote up the proposal. And I sent it to the curriculum committee. I said "This is my idea how to make it work." Before that point, we'd had lots of discussion on the various approaches but nothing got written. So I sent them a draft if you will. It was not a *fait a complet* because then, of course, they jumped into it and started tearing it up. Which is fine. If I hadn't sent them something, they wouldn't have had anything to get their teeth into. [Chair, chemistry, masters university]

Sometimes the need for prodding relates to a specific issue; sometimes to the department generally.

> If a new head comes in and he sees that the department is stagnant and is out of touch .... that head has to act to get things moving. On the other hand, if the department is already dynamic and sort of has a sense of how they want instruction and curriculum issues done, he can probably sit back and take a less active role or less aggressive role... [Chair, biology, master's university]

> Like this biochemistry issue that's ordained by the outside agency, so I'm the one who is pushing that, and I keep saying, "We have to solve this problem. We only have two years. We gotta get it going and..." Every once in a while I'll remind them. [Chair, chemistry, masters university]

Agenda Setter

The role of the agenda setter lies somewhere between the facilitator's concern with process and the initiator's development of specific ideas or proposals for faculty members to consider. The agenda setter prefers to bring issues and problems to the table, rather than proposed solutions. Thus, he or she acts in a more neutral way than the initiator, expecting that the faculty will develop their own suggestions or solutions, but takes a stronger control of process than the facilitator. Thus, an agenda setter, as one chair said, sets forth a "what if" rather than a draft proposal. Agenda setters often give charges to committees, then wait a lengthy time to see what the committee will suggest before taking

a stronger prodding role.[4] The following quotes illustrate various reasons for agenda-setting.

> In the beginning of the academic year I give a charge to the committee... These are problems that I perceive. I typically do not recommend solutions, although at times I do make a suggestion and say, you know, this is what I see. What I've found is I work very hard not to have the committee sort of sit down and say "OK, he thinks this is a problem, now what does he want? How does he want it solved?" I don't want to operate in that environment. [Chair, accounting and information systems, research university]

> Primarily [my role] would be bringing to a department meeting a discussion of issues that I think are important for the department to address. If they agree, then they refer that to our curriculum committee, which chews on it for awhile, and then something comes out at the other end, which comes back to the department for a decision. [Chair, chemistry, master's university]

> I think you have a limited amount of time to help set an agenda, the chair person is an agenda setter and the agenda is one that is either picked up on or not. I mean you can't mandate it, particularly, I mean we're not

[4] We note that the term "agenda setter" can be used in a different way, that is, to speak of someone "having an agenda" can mean they have a particular viewpoint or solution in mind. In our categorization, a chair with such a viewpoint would not be an agenda-setter but an initiator.

heads here[5] or anything like that. But you can bring items to attention that can forge an agenda and it can be prioritized relative to other needs and consensus built around the agenda and the priorities. [Chair, communications, research university]

Well, I think that the faculty turn to me to set an agenda and to give a certain amount of guidance as to what I feel are the priorities for the year .... The faculty look at me as having this overview and sitting on top of everything, and by having all of the complaints, as well as the successes, filter up to my level that I should sort through it and kind of set some agendas for them. Simultaneously, the curriculum committee sets up its own agendas and then we sit and talk about it and figure out what we want to set as the primary areas that they're going to work on in any given year. [Chair, mathematics and computer science, doctoral university]

I would like them to feel probably it's much better if they're the ones that put the idea on the table in a well-conceived way, because faculty will be less skeptical of that than if it seems to be from above. And really I've never put something on the table myself. I've kind of put on the "what if." [I use the] "Have you thought about this?" approach but it really has to come from faculty if their role as being in charge of the curriculum is [to be] maintained. [Chair, art, research university]

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[5] A few chairs made a distinction between department "heads" with considerable administrative power (frequently in a union context) and department chairs who often rule by power of persuasion.

The role of delegator seems to be a special case of either agenda setting or facilitating that takes lack of initiation to an extreme. An agenda-setting chair stays somewhat involved in overseeing the curriculum planning process and helping to move it forward; a facilitator helps devise and guide the process. In contrast, a delegator simply selects capable people to lead the process and then turns to other tasks. The delegator also typically delegates the burdensome paperwork, believing that this is a faculty responsibility. We encountered total delegation rarely in our interviews.

Coordinator

The role of coordinator subsumes the roles we originally coded as manager, supervisor, conflict resolver, and juggler. The role this chair plays is to provide structure, task orientation and paperwork support to the faculty as they work in committees delegated to do curriculum planning. A chair who plays this role may or may not take an active role during the curriculum planning process but he or she is ready to advance and implement the decisions when they are made. The coordinator frequently mentions writing course descriptions or catalog copy to fulfill requirements of various curriculum committees above the department level.

> Well, I take the initiative in terms of pulling together or setting the faculty meetings when we work on curriculum and setting the time aside for that... And then also I'm involved in the discussion and oftentimes I will sum up after we've gone through a curriculum development phase, help sum up what's done and make sure that faculty get that information.

> Sometimes I have my administrative assistant write a report so we get the gist of what we decided. And overlook or make sure that that report is accurate from my perspective. [Chair, education-curriculum and instruction, research university]

> [The faculty] expect that I provide the opportunity and on the other end of it, I also provide the support. I don't want to bog them down with paper, I mean whenever you're putting together a curriculum that has to get approval, there's a lot of paper, you know there's forms to fill out and all that. And I'll take that duty on and provide secretarial staff to do that. ... So I kind of help them implement it on one side and provide some time and some impetus to do it, and on the other end I'll provide the support materials, so that they're not wasting their time filling out papers, but they're putting their time into developing a curriculum. [Chair, industrial technology, masters university]

The coordinator also stresses detecting and remedying problems that arise after a curriculum change is made. In particular, he or she mentions staffing courses and resolving schedule conflicts as important curriculum roles. The stress on coordination frequently appears to be associated with the existence of numerous committees for large multi-section courses where the teams of faculty teaching the courses are seen as primarily responsible for their development.

I'm having to restructure a lot of teaching schedules because we've phased out a lot of old courses. We have the two new introductory courses and three brand-new core courses that were never taught before coming online, so there's a lot of uneasiness with regarding the faculty in terms of who's going to be teaching and all of that, so right now I'm working on a five-year plan to try to make sure that the courses are covered and that people know what they're supposed to be doing, and when they're supposed to be doing it. [Chair, biology, masters university]

Well, basically my role is to insure that we offer all the classes that we put on the schedule. Each year I'll develop a master schedule, and we look at previous enrollments, and kind of get an idea of about how many sections we'll need... [Chair, biology, community college]

Sometimes a chair describes a unilateral action to achieve coordination where problems are perceived.

This is a case, though, where I simply had to notify people via e-mail how we would be teaching these courses next year... in the first three years of these new introductory courses, we were going to have nine different faculty rotate through them. I didn't believe that would allow us to anchor the courses down initially or provide any continuity...we had complaints from students about the lack of continuity... so what I did was just assign a team of two people to each of these new course for the next

three years.. And then we can revisit having multiple people involved in those courses. [Chair, biology, masters university]

Sensor

The department chair's role we have called sensor encompasses sensing both problems and opportunities. It includes the roles originally coded as problem sensor, external sensor, vision setter, and information broker. The role really has four facets and a chair may emphasize one or more of these. One facet is to sense problems or difficulties within the department's curriculum that merit attention and possible adjustment.

> And during the exit interviews, I sort of sensed, from the seniors, that we are not fully meeting all the objectives we have in that two-course series, I then collected some additional information from our juniors and the current sophomores and found out what the problems are. And I'm going to bring that to the curriculum committee, and maybe the faculty members who are directly involved with those two courses, to correct that situation. [Chair, biological systems engineering, research university]

> I see my role as looking ahead and defining issues for one thing. Seeing problems as they [occur] or issues that begin to emerge and defining them and seeing if the department wants to take them on. [Chair, math and computer science, doctoral university]

A second facet is to be aware of what is going on in the institutional environment external to the department and help the faculty respond to new institutional mandates, budget crises, state initiatives, and the like.

> I would call me a process leader, a facilitator, an organizer, and a watchdog. By that I mean the watchdog function is the fact that I am in other levels of the university so I see things when they're coming. I see problems, I see enrollments, I see things that are happening and so I bring things to the faculty's attention. [Chair, communication, doctoral university]

> I have some ideas, my advantage is that I get to see a little bit larger picture than all of the faculty do. They get involved in the particular concentration that they're in, or the courses that they're involved in and they simply might not know what some of the other faculty are really dealing with on a certain level. So I do get to see that, and by dealing with other department chairs (I'm kind of the contact with some interaction with other departments). So some interdepartmental kinds of offerings and so on, I kind of get a little more information on it. In terms of within the department, a lot of times I'll maybe introduce an idea, see how it floats. (Chair, industrial technology, master's university)

So I would say that most of our curriculum initiatives do come from individual faculty members. Now, of course, sometimes, we do get state initiatives or state mandates that require revision in curriculum and often I will be the person who will bring these to the attention of the department. [Chair, mathematics and computer science, community college]

One of my roles, of course is... sometimes there are things that come from the state.. that I have to bring to the department and ask faculty to consider in revising courses. A few years back the state legislature passed a requirement for incorporating in our general education courses a discussion of gender equity issues, sexual harassment, and diversity issues. And through a long process it was decided [at the college level] we were going to incorporate some units dealing with these issues in speech communication. So, my role was, in part, to present this issue to the department, then work with the individual faculty as they were making some revisions. [Chair, communication, community college]

A third facet is that the chair strives to be nationally or regionally connected within the discipline and its constituencies such as employers, professional associations and to bring emerging issues and trends to the faculty's attention.

I like to go to department head meetings that are field specific and to find out what's happening nationally in the area and you hear about interesting innovations that are happening other places. Or I talk to the employers and they tell me here's what your students are really strong in but here's what we would like to see more of. So I think I can be a leader in the sense of taking all that information that I'm privy to, by virtue of being department head, and bringing it in a coherent form to the faculty as suggestions. [Chair, mathematics and computer science, doctoral university]

I think ... that it's necessary to notice trends, be aware of the trends, make connections, then team build in order to meet the needs that we see out there. We've been able, we think, to capitalize on a lot of opportunities and to sort of make opportunities open up for us when we thought it would help the department and would help the students in our areas. [Co-chair, business administration, community college]

The fourth and least frequently described facet is to develop and share with the faculty comprehensive visions for the future based on the other three types of sensing.

Well, I think that I am more of a-- I think that I try to give the faculty a sense of direction. I try to suggest a vision. Try to suggest ideas-- And so in terms of focus, I mean, I think that's one thing that I do as chair.

I can help them identify the ways we should be going-- I keep reminding them that we're educating our graduates not for just two months post graduate but for a whole lifetime in transition, and they may not stay around in [the area]. [Chair, nursing, doctoral university]

The sensor who actively shares visions for the future may do so through the role of initiator discussed previously. As noted earlier, chairs who initiate proposals are typically also sensors and have obtained the ideas for the proposals they put forth through their internal and external sensing activities. But some sensors may choose another method of involvement in proposal development, such as facilitating or agenda-setting. Thus, the role of initiator seems to be especially linked with (but does not necessarily subsume) the roles of external sensor, priority setter and information broker.

Advocate

The chair who plays the advocate role believes it is important to open doors to upper administrative offices to seek advancement and respect for the department within the college or university. He or she concentrates on getting resources to support faculty both for individual efforts and for department-wide curriculum decisions. This role subsumes the roles originally coded as resource procurer, advocate, priority setter, and communicator. The examples of this activity vary according to the context.

I think part of my role is to serve our members of the department, to promote and seek our advancement within the college. I don't think

collectively we perceive ourselves in the academic culture as having the same status as some of the more traditional departments and so I try to be an advocate for us in terms of the share of resources.... I would say [the faculty] expect me to open doors, get resources whether it's technology, additional TA support, whatever, make sure that staff is there to support them. [Chair, communications, masters university]

My big job is to get [our facilities upgrades] prioritized [at the institutional level]and that can be very tough and difficult to do but that's one of the big challenges you face as chair. So you have faculty who say "Which [facility and its related specialty] are we going to try to upgrade first?" [Chair, art, research university]

Sometimes I frankly serve as an advocate, because I can be a little more influential dealing with the faculty as a whole than, say, an assistant professor can. [Chair, accounting and information systems, research university]

And I helped facilitate some meetings with administrators to keep them aware of what was going on and to gain support. [Chair, applied engineering, masters university]

And they will come and talk to me if there is come obstacle or something needs clarification, or I need to talk to the dean or the vice

president and see what needs to be done to get things moving. [Chair, communication, community college]

We've also been much more diligent about communicating with the rest of the university about how we do things, and we were not doing that before. And the result is that the perception, the way the math department is perceived in the university has changed quite a bit... [Chair, mathematics, research university]

Standard Setter

Chairs who see themselves as standard setters indicate a responsibility to be either role models or monitors of quality in the department, or both. They may monitor compliance with mandates such as institution-wide assessment, program review, or accreditation standards. Using strategies somewhat less direct than those used by initiators, they may write model drafts of curriculum or grant proposals to illustrate new possibilities and appropriate style to the faculty. They may collect and review course syllabi (or suggest that a committee do so) as part of each faculty member's annual evaluation or as input to curriculum decisions. In this way, the standard-setter chairs may serve directly as mentors to faculty members but some also emphasize their responsibility to hire "good people" who will be seen as role models and upholders of quality. This role subsumes roles originally coded as monitor, standard setter, employer of good people, and time protector. We found only a few chairs who saw their role as standard setter and, despite discussion in almost every interview about new assessment initiatives from both institutions and states, we found very few chairs who said their role was to lead the faculty

in evaluating the curriculum to determine if it achieved what they hoped. The following quotes illustrate these varied standard-setting activities: hiring good people, role modeling, mentoring, and monitoring.

> I think if a person wants to develop a good program, the best way to do it is to surround yourself with good people and then give them the leeway to give input and help make the decisions when it comes down to it, when there's a final decision has to be made on a particular topic. [Chair, education-curriculum & instruction, research university)

> ...and so, since I was the department chair, I figured I should probably write the first unit and then circulate that to kind of give them an idea of what might work...[Chair, biology, community college]

> I think another thing is they use me in a kind of consultative relationship... particularly the younger faculty-- being a bit of a standard setter, you know? I not only model those behaviors, I look for opportunities for the faculty to think about those, you know? [Chair, communications, research university]

> I also, of course, facilitate our assessment of student academic achievement process which links up to curriculum, because we had our North Central visitation a couple of years ago and heavy emphasis was assessment of student academic achievement. And we have a whole cycle

that we run through with all our courses. And part of my job is to make sure that we are following that assessment process out each year. (Chair, communications, community college)

The role of time protector was assumed by only two chairs but we mention it because, as illustrated by the first quotation below, it affected the types of settings in which we were able to study "continuous planning" departments.

I guess the main thing is that I feel that one of my jobs is to protect the time of the people that work for me, and although I was willing to donate my own time to this [interview] project, I do feel that part of my job is not to let extraneous things come at the people that I've delegated tasks to. So I guess, I might-- perhaps I would feel differently at the end of the interview-- but I don't know that I should sucker other people into [the project]. [Chair, mathematics and computer science, research university] [6]

Part of what you do is you do the work that you don't want the faculty to waste their time doing. At least that's my own philosophy. I need to free up their time so they can do what they do best. [Chair, chemistry, masters university]

[6] The chair did decide to share the names of some appropriate faculty members to be interviewed. In some other cases, however, due to similar reasoning some chairs declined our request to interview faculty in the departments originally selected from our pool.

Foci of leadership roles

As we studied chairs' discussions of their roles and listened to their descriptions of curriculum development processes, it seemed to us that each role could be associated with a specific concern within the curriculum decision making process. For example, the sensor is concerned with identifying current and future contexts for departmental activities, especially issues and trends in the environment of the discipline and the institution that may merit response. The sensor is concerned with the influences external to the department that deserve attention and suggest review of the curriculum, and possibly change. The chair may accept the sensor role or not. Sometimes, whether or not the chair is an active sensor, a similar role may be played by other faculty members who are active in external affairs.

The initiator, the agenda setter and the facilitator are all concerned with the development of curriculum proposals. But the leader behavior they exhibit with respect to such proposals differs. The agenda setter is concerned with issues but open to solutions by others. The initiator is concerned with the proposals themselves, assessing how well they might respond to the issues. The facilitator is more concerned with the process of responding to the issues (and sometimes arranges a specific process), leaving both the particular issues and solutions to other faculty members. Although some leaders may play more than one of these roles, especially when they prod faculty members, chairs generally see themselves as choosing one of them. The role of facilitator should not be perceived as a *laissez faire* role in curriculum leadership since it is undertaken consciously in preference to the other two roles. The choice is based on chairs' beliefs, influenced by personal style

and local tradition, about the relative amounts of responsibility they and other faculty should play in the curriculum development process.

The advocate role is concerned with procuring resources and building credibility for the department. The coordinator role is concerned with the paperwork requirements to which curriculum descriptions eventually must conform, and with the implementation of curriculum decisions, for example, staffing and scheduling the teaching program. According to literature we reviewed, both of these roles are inextricably a part of the chair's job and few chairs may be at liberty to ignore them. Unless the chair is willing to delegate or obtain assistance, especially for the coordinating role, these activities can consume time and overshadow concern with sensing or dealing with proposals. When this occurs, the chairperson may rightfully be called a "caretaker" with respect to the more optional roles. Such cases may characterize the "typical" chairpersons studied in previous research who seemed to be so busy with administrative duties that they spent little effort on other aspects of curriculum leadership. Relatively few of the chairpersons we interviewed emphasized the roles of advocate or coordinator. Others more casually mentioned these roles, perhaps considering them too routine to emphasize in response to our questions.

Finally the standard setter is concerned with monitoring the program's successes and failures, and assuring that both internal and external standards are met. An alternative to standard setting is the "reflective evaluator" who might propose, advocate for, and coordinate a process of regular, thoughtful examination of whether the curriculum is meeting its intended goals. Theoretically and ideally, this type of reflective or formative evaluation would be a feedback link in a continuous curriculum development process. We

had expected to find such a link in our sample of departments engaged in regular curriculum planning but it seldom appeared in our interviews even though many departments engaged in some type of (usually mandated) outcomes assessment. The concern existed among the chairs but a corresponding leadership role was missing. Clearly, the chairperson is obliged to play neither a standard setting nor a reflective evaluator role and many do not include either in their leadership repertoire even when they are comparatively attentive to curriculum leadership in other ways.

In Figure 2, we attempt to portray graphically our notions about how the leadership roles map on to various aspects of a generalized process of curriculum, and our sense of the choices chairpersons have. Concern with external and internal issues and trends was viewed by most chairpersons as a key role in curriculum leadership. By portraying the sensor role top and center in the diagram, we are speculating that whether or not a department is one that continuously plans and is responsive to stakeholders may depend on how well the chair or other leaders perform the sensing function. When it comes to generating proposals, the chair may play no part or may choose among several roles, in particular facilitator, agenda setter, and initiator. Agenda setting and initiating are connected more closely to sensing than is facilitating. In our graphic, we use a dotted arrow to show this weaker link. In the case of one set of concerns, namely standards, quality and success, nearly all of the chairpersons we talked to believed they should be doing more evaluation and predicted, in fact, they would soon be expected to do so. But almost uniformly, they lamented their lack of expertise and confessed that they provided little leadership in this area. To portray this acknowledged deficit, we drew a dotted circle

to represent the potential role of reflective evaluator and dotted lines in the process diagram connecting it with both coordination and sensing.

Figure 2 goes about here

Context for Departmental Leadership: Variations by Department Size, Type of Institution, and Discipline

Our sample was chosen to explore a wide variety of institutional and disciplinary contexts rather than to compare variations of leadership roles within settings and disciplines in any valid and reliable way. Nevertheless, we share our impressions of contextual variations gained from the interviews for other researchers who may wish to pursue comparisons.

Department size affects the role that a department chair plays, especially in regard to the undergraduate curriculum when the department also offers graduate programs. In large departments, major responsibility for curriculum development is often assigned to associate chairs, undergraduate and graduate curriculum committee chairs, or specialty teams who work under the chair's (or associate chair's) general supervision. Coordination of the curriculum after it is developed may also be delegated to these groups. Thus, in large departments, the chairperson frequently plays the roles of agenda setter or facilitator rather than initiator or sensor. The large department seemed to us to resemble an orchestra where first chairs (i.e. committee chairs) are responsible for each instrumental section, while the conductor (i.e. department chair) puts all the sections together and guides

interpretation. This pattern of leadership contrasts sharply with that in the smallest departments where faculty often act as a committee of the whole directly led by the chair.

Institutional type also affects the type of leadership department chairs provide. In research and doctoral institutions, department chairs see their primary roles as those of facilitator and advocate. They trust that research-oriented faculty members are "self-starters" and view them as most knowledgeable about curriculum trends and needs in their sub-specialties. For external sensing and initiation especially, the chair may rely on these specialists to recognize needs and opportunities for responsive planning and to initiate proposals. Standard setting may focus on hiring the best faculty available and supporting their efforts. In contrast, faculty in teaching-oriented universities and community colleges are more often "generalists" in their field and the subject matter to be taught is somewhat familiar to all. Here, chairs more often initiate curriculum discussions. They are more often sensors, too, serving as liaisons with other institutions, the workplace, and professional associations. Standard setting, more often than in research universities, involves role modeling and mentoring.

In both research and teaching institutions, chairs stress that advocacy --both obtaining resources and staff for the group's plans and endeavors, and portraying the department positively to higher level administrators -- is an essential form of leadership. Thus the advocate role is common in all types of institutions, large and small, although it may become considerably more complex in large institutions.

When asked directly, most of the chairs we interviewed in institutions where a faculty union existed indicated that the union had little influence on the curriculum planning process. A few cited it as a positive influence because the contract guaranteed

faculty ownership of the curriculum. The union, many chairs told us, affected mostly personnel and workload issues. However, we heard muted clues that the union may exert indirect influence, especially through its impact on how the role of the chair is defined in a unionized setting. We found institutions where the chair's authority and initiative were limited by union contracts specifically assigning curriculum matters to a faculty group that excluded chairs by definition. In some cases, participation in curriculum planning may be a condition of promotion and tenure, but the power to evaluate or reward a faculty member's contributions may be beyond the purview of the chair. Conversely, we found other colleges where the union contract provides explicit authority through its personnel provisions to the chair (usually called a "head" and considered a member of a "management team") to lead, to initiate proposals, to appoint committee chairs, and to reassign faculty time for curriculum planning.

Finally, curriculum leadership is influenced by whether the institutional climate emphasizes curriculum planning, assessment, periodic program review, or other types of strategic planning. Especially in community colleges, we found that the college administration had sometimes created an ethos of monitoring and improvement that caused department chairs to view themselves as members of a administrative "quality team" that implied their clear responsibility to lead curriculum planning.

Earlier empirical literature stresses differences among disciplines in terms of curricular purposes and processes, the type of leadership faculty will accept, the types of curriculum discussions they have, and their desire for direct involvement (Braxton and Hargens 1997; Stark and Lattuca 1997). We found only modest evidence of such differences, perhaps due to the wide variety of disciplines in our study and the

simultaneous variation of other characteristics like size and institutional type. In some disciplines and professional fields, such as chemistry and nursing, however, key issues and ongoing discussions were attributed to the influence of disciplinary or professional associations and accrediting agencies. The need to procure resources (and the impact of technology) was discussed more prominently by chairs in some fields than others. For example, computer science, biology and communications had more resource needs than did history. Also, regardless of institutional type, external sensing was much more common in professional fields. Chairs in fields like business, engineering technology, art, nursing and communications are far more active in sensing job markets and potential enrollment than are chairs in most arts and science disciplines.

An unanticipated issue that stood out in our interviews was the complex situation of "composite" departments that include disparate fields of study (for example, several different social sciences, several humanities fields, several performing arts fields, science and mathematics or mathematics and computer science, several types of technological studies, or communication studies ranging from a theoretical focus on psychology of communication to the technicalities of TV production). We found these composite departments in all types of institutions. Unquestionably, the chair's leadership role in such departments is difficult. Chairs are more likely to facilitate the process of discussion without advocating any specific proposal. They are extremely wary of seeming to advocate more strongly for their own specialty and reluctant to set standards in fields not their own. Repeatedly, chairs of such composite departments described their inadequacy in acting as sensors, initiators, agenda setters, and standard setters for fields in which they had not been specifically trained. This reluctance seems to mimic the role of the chair in

dealing with the within-department differences in a large research department where a few faculty members are responsible for each sub-specialty.

SUMMARY

Contrary to previous studies which focused on chairs in general, we found that most department chairs in our more selective sample are articulate about curriculum development and give it a high priority. These chairs are concerned with sensing the possible need for change, with supporting faculty members who have good ideas, and with setting agendas, facilitating, or initiating-- but less frequently directing-- curriculum renewal. Often eschewing a hands-on approach, they use varied organizational structures and ways of delegating responsibility to facilitate faculty curricular initiative. We suggest that previous researchers may have underestimated chairs' curricular leadership by seeking more directive manifestations than those described by our sample. The balance between chairperson leadership and faculty ownership of the curriculum is maintained in non-directive ways in many settings. Yet, our sample was selected from among chairs that lead "continuously planning" departments. It is possible that in departments that provosts did not nominate for our study, some chairs may completely delegate or even neglect curriculum leadership as previous research would indicate.

Chairs in this study expressed a special responsibility for viewing the department's curricular issues more broadly than faculty within the contexts of the institution, academic field, job market, and transfer articulation needs. We also noted, however, that the role the chair chooses to play because of his or her concern for ideas or process may help to determine whether and how other types of curriculum leaders arise within the department

faculty, and vice versa. Chairs definitely do not work alone in curriculum planning nor do they feel solely accountable. Most chairs identified one or more faculty colleagues who play distinct leadership roles, often complementary to their own, especially with respect to technological advances, teaching improvement, or newly mandated evaluation and assessment activities. Curriculum development, the chairs told us, is the responsibility of the faculty. The chair's job is to make sure, often by subtle means, that faculty fulfill that responsibility.

Most chairs we interviewed felt especially challenged when it came to the demands of information gathering associated with the sensing and reflective evaluation roles. Information that "continuous planning" departments gather to support curriculum decisions varies widely, is largely informal, and is seldom used systematically in the curriculum planning process. Chairs view information about curriculum trends in peer and transfer-related institutions as important data that they usually know how to obtain. However, nearly all chairs expressed a sense of inadequacy with their department's curriculum evaluation and assessment practices and with the expertise available within the department to gather and analyze such information. While many relied on institutional researchers for alumni satisfaction and success data, they often felt that such offices did not supply information sufficiently focused on more specific department issues to be useful.

IMPLICATIONS

This study has several implications for institutional researchers. First, when institutional researchers work with department chairpersons, it is important for them to

recognize that chairs may exercise very different styles of leadership in the curriculum planning process. These styles range from the facilitator's process-oriented approach to the initiator's very active approach in initiating proposals. Institutional researchers may need to work with faculty chairs in different ways and often with leaders other than the chair, especially in matters of data coordination and program review.

Second, institutional researchers may recognize in our analysis a role (coordination) that is heavily emphasized for department chairs by administrators, and two roles (advocacy and sensing) about which there is less institutional direction. Institutional researchers customarily assist chairs in coordination by supplying internal data, such as enrollment trends, and faculty workload figures. But researchers could assist chairs in communicate internally as advocates for their departments by helping them understand the importance of comparative data among institutional units in administrative decision making and resource allocation. Finally, in their sensing role, chairs are much concerned with how to detect external trends specific to their disciplines and professional fields. They believe they do this well but their approaches seem quite ad hoc. Institutional researchers obviously cannot do the sensing in every field but they could help chairs learn how to obtain data more closely tailored to department needs.

Third, this study suggests an important role for institutional researchers in helping to improve departmental capacity for evaluation and assessment. Institutional researchers are positioned to encourage continuous curriculum review and increasingly have opportunities to do so as they provide information and assist with assessment, program review, and long-range planning. Information needs of departments, as well as approaches that faculty find acceptable, vary greatly. Our findings reinforce the importance of working

with department leaders in context, especially taking into account the differences among departments in terms of size, mission and organizational complexity.

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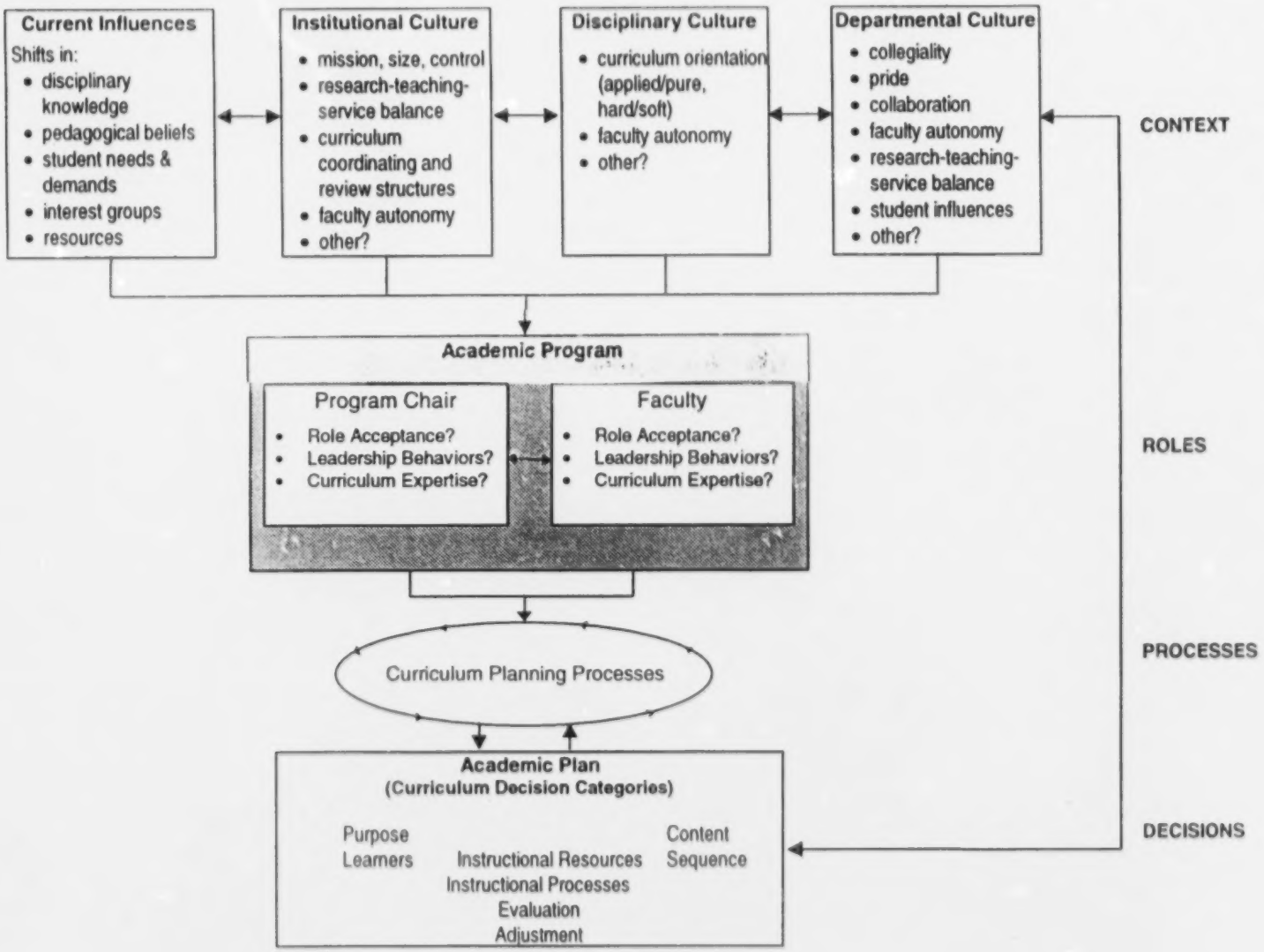

Figure 1. A Framework for Exploring Curriculum Leadership

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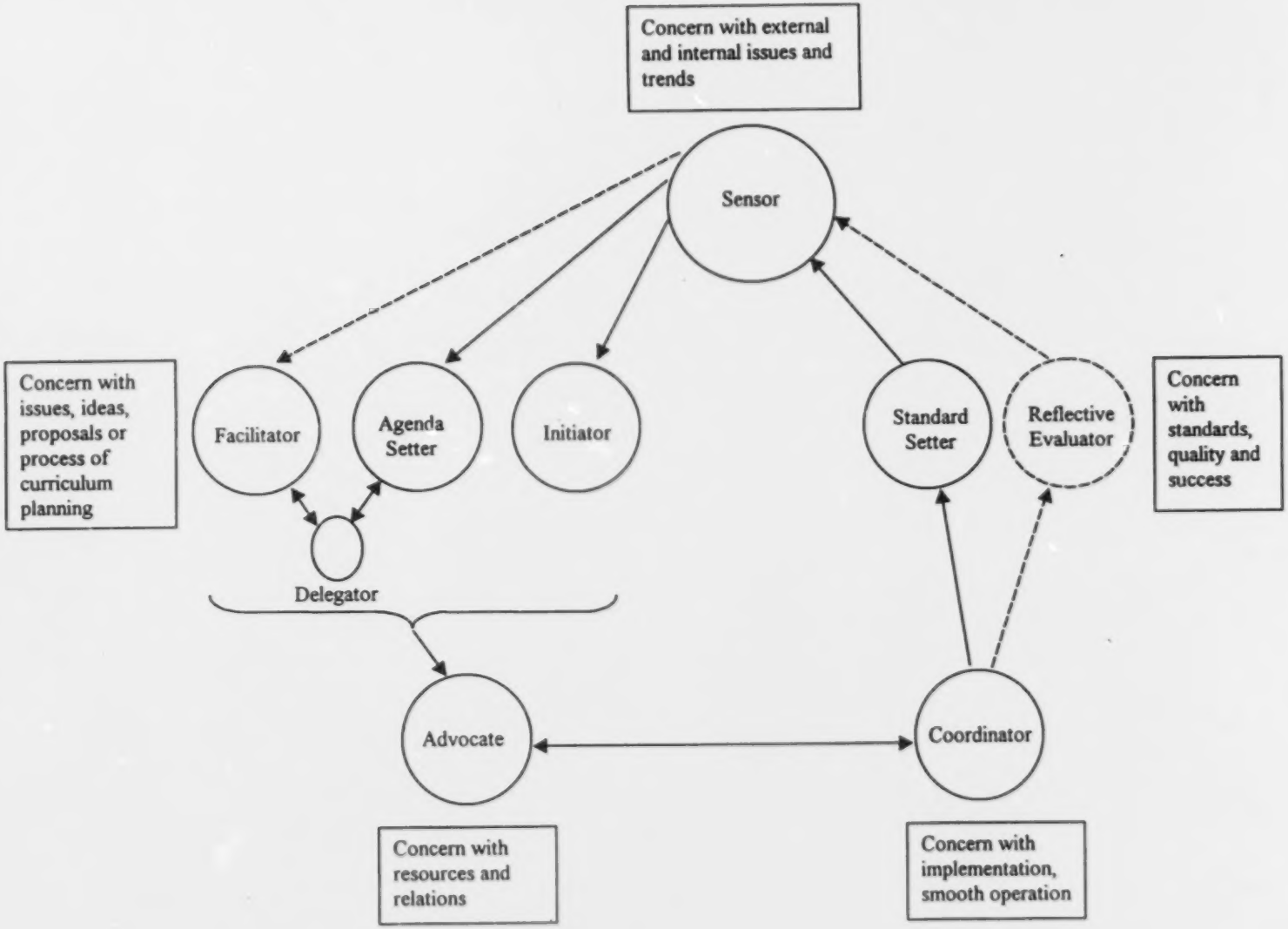

Figure 2. Chairperson leadership roles and the curriculum planning process